

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 17, 2020

Mr. Robert Redfield, M.D.  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road Northeast  
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Dear Director Redfield:

I write to express my concern and bring your attention to the devolving and dangerous situation in Iowa where several meat packing plants have suspended operations after failing to control the spread of COVID-19 among their workforce, while others risk closure because of outbreaks. We must put the health and safety of Iowa families above all else at this time.

Tyson Foods' pork processing plant in Columbus Junction closed on April 6, 2020 due to a large-scale outbreak of COVID-19 at their facility and National Beef's processing plant in Tama County has also temporarily closed their doors after several employees tested positive for the virus. Unfortunately, this issue is not isolated to Iowa, as we've seen outbreaks at processing plants in places like South Dakota and Colorado as well. In these challenging times, we need to do everything we can to keep our workers safe and healthy and make sure companies have the guidance they need to protect their workers.

Our meat processing facilities play a critical role in our food supply chain, especially in Iowa where so much of our economy is organized around food and agriculture production. Already, the temporary closures of these plants are having devastating ramifications for our hog farmers, who could soon face difficult decisions about what to do with their livestock.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has put forth industry-specific guidance for our airlines and transit operators. The workers keeping food on our grocery store shelves deserve the same.

I urge you to issue such guidance immediately in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Labor. When it comes to our food supply chain, our processors need somewhere to turn if COVID-19 affects their workforce. Issuing industry-specific guidance for food processing will ensure there are consistent, people-centered responses to prevent and manage outbreaks in plants across the country.

Additionally, I ask that you work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to deliver tests, personal protective equipment, and any other supplies that may be needed to keep workers safe. I also hope that you will consider deploying public health professionals to any affected community that requests additional assistance on the ground to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 among these essential workers.

Please do not hesitate to reach my office at (202) 225-2911 if you have any questions.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Abby', followed by a stylized flourish.

Abby Finkenauer  
Member of Congress

CC:

Secretary Sonny Perdue  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Secretary Eugene Scalia  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20210